

VZCZCXRO4801
RR RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHPW
DE RUEHEK #0478/01 1360620
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 150620Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1014
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2514
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0906
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2296
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2911
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000478

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN
MOSCOW FOR DEA TIMOTHY JONES

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [KCRM](#) [KCOR](#) [SNAR](#) [KG](#)
SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN - NOTES FROM THE SOUTH

REF: A. BISHKEK 432
[1](#)B. BISHKEK 428
[1](#)C. BISHKEK 405
[1](#)D. BISHKEK 359

BISHKEK 00000478 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Amb. Marie L. Yovanovitch for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: On April 29, 2008, Ambassador Yovanovitch traveled to Osh, Kyrgyzstan and met with representatives from the Osh Governor's Office, members of local political parties, and the Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency's Southern Command. Water shortages, rolling black-outs, rising prices and corruption were among the main issues raised in this area that is still recovering from the December 2007 earthquakes. The four U.S.-funded counter-narcotics Mobile Interdiction Teams (MOBITS) operating in Osh have yet to make a significant seizure or arrest, but they are hopeful that with better weather bringing access to the mountain border crossings and more efficient use of existing conspiracy laws, that they can increase their efficiency. End Summary.

The Breadbasket of Kyrgyzstan

[1](#)2. (SBU) Located on the edge of the Ferghana Valley and the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan, Osh is a nexus for agriculture and cross-border trade. Lacking significant manufacturing facilities or industrial infrastructure, Osh and its surrounds depend on agriculture for its livelihood. At a meeting with Deputy Governor Bolot Burgoev, who is in charge of agriculture, the Ambassador learned of the oblast's pressing concerns regarding water shortages. The reservoirs that supply hydroelectricity and fresh water are critically low, and the oblast is undertaking water conservation measures in an attempt to avert a crisis later in the year. Water service to Osh has been limited and is turned off periodically. In separate meetings, U.S. citizens reported a bleak view of the electrical and water situation; noting that outages are frequent, unscheduled and can last up to two

weeks. Irrigation is only permitted at night.

13. (SBU) Deputy Governor Burgoev reported that fuel prices and the cost of consumer goods have risen, but he claimed that food prices have remained moderately stable. He attributed this to the Osh region being relatively self-sufficient in food production. In contrast, local citizens and members of local political parties told us that food prices continue to rise in Osh, similar to the situation in the rest of Kyrgyzstan (Ref B).

The December Earthquakes) Four Months On

14. (U) In December 2007, Osh was struck by an earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale. While there was no loss of life, a series of after-shocks further damaged this city where buildings are primarily constructed of concrete, brick and even mud in the cases of some private homes. Deputy Governor for Social Affairs and Education Aziza Turduyeva reported that the city is still struggling to rebuild and repair buildings four months after the earthquake. While many homes and apartment buildings were damaged, the local schools built of concrete appear to have suffered the most, as several were condemned outright and replacement sites for classes have not been found. The local government lacks the funds to repair or build new buildings. USAID has provided funds to rebuild two schools in Osh, and the initial phases of the project are underway.

15. (SBU) Recently appointed to her position, Deputy Governor Turduyeva expressed interest in increasing activities for

BISHKEK 00000478 002.2 OF 003

gender-related issues. In her opinion, women's groups in Osh are small and need to expand and she would like to support efforts to encourage growth.

"The South Has Been Asleep") Local Politics

16. (C) The Ambassador met local representatives from the Social Democratic Party, Jangy Kyrgyzstan (New Kyrgyzstan) and Kyrgyzstan Ayaldary (Women of Kyrgyzstan). All three parties were in agreement that corruption is one of the most serious problems facing Osh and Kyrgyzstan -- encompassing everything from property transfers and real estate zoning to crime and the political process. As reported in reftels A and C, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan recently engaged in a controversial land swap. Though located far from any of the affected regions, citizens in Osh appeared outraged and speculated that corruption had to be involved. Party representatives blamed power shortages on the corrupt sale of energy from power stations to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The Social Democrat representative reported that there were no corruption cases filed against any local government officials during the last year and that the recently appointed mayor was ineffective, not helping the citizens of Osh, and actively selling agricultural land for private home construction. Social and economic problems such as low wages, unemployment, and rising prices all contribute to a decreased quality of life for the average Osh citizen. "The South has been asleep," said the representative from the Social Democratic party, but all local parties at the meeting appeared keen to defend their party platforms and build local constituents, in advance of local elections in September.

Counter-Narcotics and the Kyrgyz Approach

17. (C) Kyrgyzstan and Osh, in particular, have benefited from funding from CENTCOM in its fight against illegal narcotics. Kyrgyzstan is a major trans-shipment route for illegal

narcotics from Afghanistan to Russia and the rest of Europe. The amount of illegal drugs, such as heroin, hashish and opium, transported through and used in Osh oblast is estimated to be as much as 14% of Afghan's production. While in Osh, the Ambassador met CENTCOM contractors working with the U.S.-funded Mobile Interdiction Teams (MOBITS), as well as General Sultanov, head of the Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency (DCA), and General Major Mirzakarimov, DCA Deputy in Charge of the South. Coincidentally, General Sultanov was on the same flight as the Ambassador from Bishkek. While waiting for the plane to depart, Sultanov cavalierly announced that he was going to Osh to punish his department. In his opinion, they were not performing adequately, and they were not only to be subjected to a severe dressing-down, but also a 50% cut in their quarterly and annual bonuses. This is a severe blow to low-paid government employees who are supposed to resist corruption.

18. (C) There are currently four MOBITS teams operational in the Osh oblast. CENTCOM provided funds to construct a small office, barracks, and base camps in the southern mountains on the Tajik border. While meeting separately with the CENTCOM contractors charged with training the MOBITS units, the contractors admitted that the units had only made two small seizures in the past six months. They cited the extreme winter weather conditions in the mountains and lack of base camps for shelter as two of the main reasons. The CENTCOM contractors described the MOBITS units as eager to be trained and enthusiastic in discharging their duties. The CENTCOM contractors began working with the MOBITS units two months ago and state that there is much work to be done.

BISHKEK 00000478 003.2 OF 003

19. (C) In a roundtable with the Ambassador, General Sultanov and General Major Mirzakarimov, the CENTCOM trainers raised the issue of effectively using existing Kyrgyz conspiracy laws in pursuing narcotic cases and the need for funds to pay informants. The CENTCOM contractors cited that the Kyrgyz law gave the DCA a profound legal advantage compared to similar laws in the United States. On April 15)16, 2008, Embassy Bishkek's Resident Legal Advisor conducted training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors in Osh on using these laws in such cases. The DCA representatives were dismissive of this idea and more interested in placing blame and punishing failure. The Ambassador stated that the Embassy is interested in producing results and encouraged the DCA leadership to focus on capacity building in order to achieve the desired goals. DCA reluctantly agreed to give the MOBITS commander more time to build his unit. Sultanov also said he would look into the possibility of using Kyrgyz conspiracy laws in future cases and even agreed to look for better funding from their own budget.

110. (C) Comment: Similarly to citizens throughout Kyrgyzstan, Osh residents are facing difficult economic times. With their reliance on agriculture, Oshanye, as they are known locally, are particularly vulnerable to water problems. All parties with whom the Ambassador met expressed gratitude for the various forms of assistance the U.S. government has provided -- either through democracy programming from USAID or direct aid in the form of reconstruction. Deputy Governor Burgoev participated in an International Visitor's Program in 1999 -- and still spoke warmly of his trip almost ten years later. Yet one of the largest recipients of CENTCOM assistance -- the Drug Control Agency) is still struggling to establish its MOBITS units. While the local commanders appear to be competent and eager to use their new training and equipment, the management style of their leaders appears to hinder MOBITS progress by ruling through fear.

YOVANOVITCH